

# THE REHEARSAL.

Numb. 77

1. People said to Choose their God, as well as their King.
2. What the Voice of the People has Done.
3. The Crown was Hereditary in Saul. With the Reason of Jonathan's Love to David.
4. How God Chose David to Succeed Saul. Not by General Providence only, but by Particular Appointment.
5. Of the Ordinary Succession from Solomon: And first Breach of it by Jeroboam. With the Consequences of it.
6. How Jeroboam was set up by God. Fact the Best Interpreter of Words.

From Saturday December the 8th. to Saturday December the 15th. 1705.

*Country-m.* **Y**OU have shew'd me, Master, very Plainly how Solomon was Chosen by God, even before he was Born: And yet that he was said to be Chosen or Made KING by the People. And so how to understand that Phrase of the People being said to Choose their King. And particularly of Saul, who was Chosen by God, and not by the People, as you have shew'd. So that by the PEOPLE's Choosing no more is meant than their Recognizing and Submitting to the King, whom God sets over them.

(1.) Rehears. The force of that Phrase will Appear Plainer to you, when you Consider, That it is Used in Respect to God Himself. Thus said Joshua to the People, Josh. xxiv. 15. If it seem Evil unto you to serve the Lord, Choose you this day whom you will serve, whether the Gods which your Fathers served that were on the other side of the Flood; or the Gods of the Amorites, in whose Land ye Dwell: But as for me, and my House, We will serve the Lord. Here is Choice of Gods laid before the People, and free Liberty given them to Choose whom they wou'd.

The like said the Prophet to them, 1 Kin. xviii. 21. How long Halt ye between two Opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him.

Here the People are made Judges, whether the Lord or Baal was the True God. That is, so far as to Determine their own Choice, which of them they wou'd Serve, and own as their God. But I hope none will say, that their Determination did Decide the Right, so as to Make the Lord not to be God, if the Voice of the People gave it against Him!

Therefore that Phrase of the PEOPLE's Choo-sing, do's not always Imply an Authority in them, to Decide the Right. But only to Determine their own Practice. For which they are still Answerable to God, and to the King, if they take the Wrong side.

(2.) And it is Plain they may take the Wrong side. For the Voice of the People gave it for Absalom, against his Father David. And gave Abtaliyah 7 years Possession of the Throne, against young Joash. And gave it for Barabbas, against Christ, when it was left Freely to their own Choice; and Pilat was Determin'd to Save their King. But the Voice of the People Prevail'd. And Entail'd his Blood on Them and on their Children.

(3.) Country-m. But pray Master, tell me, when God gave the Kingdom to Saul, was it Hereditary? Or only given to him, and a new Choice to be after his Death?

Rehears. It was Hereditary. And that it was so understood; is Plain from that sharp Reproof which Saul gave his Eldest Son Jonathan, who was to have succeeded him, 1 Sam. xx, 30, 31. Thou Perverse Rebel (as our Margin Reads it) do not I know that thou hast Chosen the Son of Jesse to thine own Confusion— For as long as the Son of Jesse liveth upon the Ground, thou shalt not be Established, nor thy Kingdom.

Country-m. It seems strange that Jonathan shou'd have such a Love for David; and seek to Preserve his Life; if he thought David was to Supplant him in the Kingdom.

Rehears. He knew that God had given the

Kingdom to David. And he wou'd not Rebell against God, as his Father did, by seeking to Destroy David. He acted a Wiser part, as well as more Just. Knowing it in vain to Strive against God. He Cultivated an Intire Friendship with David. Which was the surest Means to Preserve Himself, and his Family from being cut off by David, when he came to the Crown, for all the Prosecution of Saul against him. And he made that Agreement with David, on Account of the Services he then did him, in Preserving him from the Rage of Saul: and for the Mighty Love that was between them. And he took an Oath from David to this Purpose. Thus said Jonathan to him, 1 Sam. xx. 14. And thou shalt not only while I yet Live shew me the Kindness of the Lord, that I Die not (for Jonathan might have surviv'd Saul) But also thou shalt not cut off thy Kindness from my House for Ever: No, not when the Lord hath Cut off the Enemies of David, every one from the Face of the Earth. So Jonathan made a Covenant with the House of David, saying, let the Lord even Require it at the hands of David's Enemies. And Jonathan caused David to Swear again; because he Loved him; for he Loved him; as his own Soul. And Chap. xxiii. 17. Jonathan said to him, Fear not, for the Hand of Saul my Father shall not find thee: And thou shalt be King over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee. And that also Saul my Father knoweth. And Saul himself Confessed it, Chap. xxiv. 20. And now behold (said he to David, being overcome with David's great Generosity and Kindness to him, in Saving his Life, tho' he most unjustly Persecuted David, and fought his Life; and that David knew he was to Succeed him) I know well, that thou shalt surely be King, and that the Kingdom of Israel shall be Established in thine hand. Swear now therefore unto me by the Lord, that thou wilt not cut off my Seed after me, and that thou wilt not Destroy my Name out of my Father's house. And David Sware unto Saul. Here Saul took the same Method which he had before blam'd in Jonathan his Son.

(4.) Country-m. It is frequently said, that God did Choose David to be King; Particularly 1 Chr. xxviii. 4. which you Quoted to me in your last: But you have Instructed me, to search what I can into Matter of Fact, as being the surest Knile whereby to Understand the Words or Phrases of Holy Scripture. Now David might have been brought to the Throne, by the Ordinary Course of Providence; and so be said to be Chosen of God. But do's it appear, that God did Name him Particularly, and Order him to be Anointed, as you have shew'd me before of Saul? For that wou'd Effectually Clear the Point, concerning the Breach of the Hereditary Succession, which was Established in the House of Saul; that it was God's own Act; and not the Rebellion, or other Politick of David, to bring it about.

Rehears. That Fact you will find Plainly set down, 1 Sam. xvi. Where God's Rejecting of Saul, and Choosing David in his Room is Particularly told. And Samuel knew no more of David, than he did of Saul, before he came to him. All was told Samuel Miraculously. And he Commanded by God, to Anoint David, to Sue-

ced Saul. Then the Crown was Transferr'd from the Tribe of Benjamin, of which Saul was, to the Tribe of Judah. And Explains what you Read in 1 Chr. xxviii. 4. That God Chose Judah, of which David was, to be the Ruler. This is the Fact by which that was brought to pass. Not barely by the Ordinary Course of Providence, in Disposing of Events: But by God's Express Order, out of His own Mouth. Which Renders the whole Matter Sure and Certain. And cuts off the Pretences of Usurpers, of coming to the Crown by Providence, against the Right; and Breaking the Rule of Hereditary Succession. For which some have taken Precedent from this of David, in his Breaking in upon the Succession which was Establish'd in the House of Saul. As if only brought to pass by Common Providence, without any Express Command of God. And so set up Providence against Precept, for the Rule of our Actions. And make Every Prosperous Wickedness, the Act of God! For which Reason, I have taken so much Pains to Clear this Instance of David, that I might Disarm the Rebels of all Subterfuge from thence.

(5.) Country-m. You have now Carry'd me, Master, through the State of the Theo-Craſe. And of the three first Kings, all Immediately Appointed by God himself. I desire to know how it went afterwards, in the Ordinary Succession of their Kings. That we may Carry on the State of the Jews Parallel to what you have shew'd of the 4 Great Monarchies: And see what Variations there were, and the Consequences of their Breaking that Rule of Government and Succession which was Given them,

Rhears. The first Breach in the Rule of the Hereditary Succession, was made by Jeroboam, who Carry'd off Ten Tribes with him, against Rehoboam the Eldest Son of Solomon. And the Consequences were very Dismal, Not only the Division of the Nation into two Kingdoms, which never Heal'd from that Day to this: But the Miserable Destruction and Confusion upon the Ten Tribes; besides the Corruption of their Religion, and their falling into Idolatry, visibly Occasion'd by this Defection of Jeroboam; who set up the Calves of Dan and Bethel, to Hinder the People from going up to Jerusalem to Worship; lest they shou'd Return to their Allegiance to the Lawful Heir. 1 Kin. xii. 17. Whence this became the Epithet of Jeroboam, Who made Israel to Sin. After this, there was no Regular Hereditary Succession in the Kingdom of Israel: But Perpetual Killing and Destroying one Another. Of which I gave you some Instances before, N. 53. And now add this to it, that of all their Kings, in Number 19. that were set up by the People, there was not one Good. This is Recorded of them in the Holy Scriptures. Till at last a Miserable End was put to that Wretched Kingdom. The People being Carry'd away Captive into Assyria. And there Loft. Never Heard of since. All the Jews now known in the World being of the Two Loyal Tribes, who adher'd to their Lawfull King, and the Hereditary Succession.

The Condition of this Kingdom of Israel, as distinct from that of Judah, was very like what I before Mention'd N. 72. Of the 4th Empire, that of the Romans, Part Iron, and Parts of Clay; part Monarchy, and Part Popular, which wou'd never Mix; but Occasion'd Endless Confusion and Slaughter.

Country-m. But it is Answer'd to this, That Jeroboam was as much set up by God, as Solomon, or David. For that, as it is Related 1 Kin. xi. 26. &c. a Prophet told Jeroboam, That God wou'd Rend Ten Tribes from the House of David, and give them to him. And ver. 38. That if he wou'd keep the Laws of God, He wou'd Build him a sure House as he Built for David. And Chap. xii. 24. He hinder'd Rehoboam from

Fighting against Jeroboam, With this Reason, this thing is from Me, said God.

Rhears. If God did set up Jeroboam, he was Lawfull and Rightfull King. But if so it makes Nothing against the Use for which I brought it, that is, The Breach of the Hereditary Rule of Succession. For that was not Observ'd in the Succession of the Kings of Israel, after Jeroboam: And was the Cause of the Misery and Confusion that follow'd. So that my Argument holds Good still.

But, Secondly, I say, That God's fore-telling what a Man will do, and what will be the Event of it, is no Argument of God's Approving it. Thus, 2 Kin. viii. 8. &c. Elisha told Hazael, That he shou'd Murder his Master, be King of Syria, Dash Children, Rip up Women with Child, and such Barbarities, that Hazael said, But What, is thy Servant a Dog: that he shou'd do this Great thing?

And for God's saying, That if Jeroboam wou'd keep His Law, He wou'd Build him a Sure House. No doubt, God who is the Sovereign Disposer of the whole Earth, may, for the Sins of a Family, or Nation, or other wise Ends of Providence, Permit Rebels and Usurpers to Prosper, and the Right Line to be Extinct. And may Build a Sure House even for Usurpers. And all this, by His Permissive Providence, without Justifying the Act of Rebellion, or Usurpation. See before Num. 66. Head 4. where I think this is made Plain.

But God's saying He wou'd Build a sure House to Jeroboam, as He Built for David, shews that the Blessing here Promis'd to Jeroboam, was that of Hereditary Monarchy. As it was in Judah, in the Posterity of David. And for want of which all those Miseries befell the Kingdom of the ten Tribes. So that this is a strong Confirmation of all That, for which I brought this Instance of Jeroboam.

Lastly, as to that Expression, This thing is from God, it may very well be Understood of God's Permissive Providence only. There are much stronger Expressions which cannot be Understood otherwise, As where God says to David, 2. Sam. xii. 11. I will take thy Wives before thine Eyes, and give them unto thy Neighbour, and be shall Lie with thy Wives in the Sight of this Sun. And I suppose no Body will say, That God did Approve of Absalom his Lying with his FATHER's Wives; far less Command it.

So that, as I said to you before, Faith is the Surest way whereby to Understand Words. I suppose David did not know what Neighbour of his it was to whom God said He wou'd Give his Wives. Nor how it was to be Fulfill'd. But when we see how it was Fulfill'd, then it is Impossible for Us to think, That God did Give these Wives to his Son, otherwise than by Permitting it, as a Just Punishment for David's Sin against Uriah.

No Man will say, That GOD Deceives, or Pollutes, or that His Laws are not Good. Yet he says, Ezek. xiv. 9. If a Prophet be Deceived — I the Lord have Deceived that Prophet. And Chap. xx. 25. I gave them Statutes that were not Good. And Ver. 26. I Polluted them in their own Gifts. That is, He suffer'd them to Pollute themselves, and to Deceive themselves, for their many Provocations, which are there Repeated: And to follow the Wicked Laws and Statutes which Themselves had made. Thus He is said to DO what He only Permits to be Done. And in this Sense we must Understand 2. Theb. 2. 11. And sent them strong Delusion, that they shou'd Believe a Lie. And he gives the Reason, For this Cause, says He, Because they Loved not the Truth, but had Pleasure in Unrighteousness. Therefore He left them to the Deceitfulness of Unrighteousness. And thus we must Understand God's being said to Harden the Heart of Pharaoh. That is, God suffer'd him to Harden his own Heart As you will find it in the History of the Fall, Related in Exodus. The Fall do's Explain it. He is there said to Harden his own Heart.

Now let us look into the Fall by which Jeroboam came to the Crown, and how that Prophecy of Abijah was Fulfill'd; And then we may Perceive whether it was of God, otherwise than by Permitting it.

First, Abijah was not sent to Anoint Jeroboam King. Nor did do it. As Samuel did to Saul and to David; and Zadok to Solomon. Abijah only told Jeroboam what wou'd Come to pass.

In the next Place, Who was it made Jeroboam King? It was the Congregation, the Voice of the People, to whom God never Gave any such Commission. As I think has been sufficiently Prov'd. It was the same People who had before Rebeld against David, under Absalom, and Sheba a Man of Belial, as he is Call'd, 2. Sam. xx. 1. The same ten Tribes then follow'd him. And us'd the very same Argument, and in the same Words, as afterwards against Rehoboam. We have no Portion in David, neither have we Inheritance in the Son of Jesse; Every Man to his Tents, O Israel. Said Sheba. The same Words says Jeroboam, and the same ten Tribes. 1. Kin. xii. 16. It is Hard to think, That Belial Dictated the one, and God the other. Or that God wou'd Write after Belial. And in the same Words!